

(Washington, DC) - **Congressman Wally Herger (R-CA) took part in a community forum regarding the inability to implement balanced forest management and its resulting impacts on our rural forested communities.** Held at the Plumas County Fairgrounds, the discussion focused largely on the recent closure of the Sierra Pacific Industries' (SPI) small-log mill in Quincy. The forum, organized by Rep. McClintock (R-CA), also included Rep. Rob Bishop (R-UT), the Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Subcommittee on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands. The panel received statements from representatives of the Forest Service; Plumas County government; Sierra Pacific Industries; members of the Quincy Library Group (QLG); and a local scientist. Herger's comments appear below:

"Over a decade ago Congress passed the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group (HFQLG) legislation as a result of compromise between local government representatives, concerned citizens, the local environmental community, and timber industry professionals. The plan represented an opportunity to break free from the timber battles of the past and instead come together for the benefit of the community and the protection of the environment. The plan enjoyed virtually unanimous support in the House, passing by a margin of 429-1. SPI built a small-log mill in Quincy on the expectation of a reliable and sustainable supply of material from HFQLG thinning projects. Unfortunately, appeals and litigation have allowed only half of the HFQLG thinning projects to be completed. These delays, in conjunction with an ailing economy, led SPI to close the small-log mill. I'm deeply saddened by the way SPI was forced to close the Quincy mill, upending hundreds of lives and careers in the process.

"There are a several reasons why we need to engage in smart and effective forest management. Catastrophic wildfires threaten our safety and our property and the situation only continues to worsen in the absence of forest management. The timber industry, crucial to the North State economy, continues to struggle resulting in more and more job loss at a time of serious economic difficulty. We have to find a way to move the QLG pilot project forward at the scale and pace originally envisioned by Congress. I'm glad that we were able to further discuss this issue with those directly affected and further raise awareness of this serious problem."

Background:

In 1998, Congress passed the Herger-Feinstein Quincy Library Group Forest Recovery Act, establishing a strategic forest management pilot project in three Northern California national forests. Relentless lawsuits and appeals have blocked the implementation of the Quincy Library

Group pilot project. By blocking projects designed to turn these problems around, increased levels of hazardous fuels remain in our forests and large fires continue to plague the area and the livelihood of local residents have been decimated. With the closure of the small-log mill 150 jobs have been lost in Quincy, not including the loss of other jobs indirectly associated with the mill's operation - a town of 450 families.